

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KADUNA 01164 301253Z
ACTION AF-10

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KADUNA 1164

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, NI
SUBJECT: ABU RESPONDS TO MOHAMMED COMMISSION

REF: LAGOS 10689

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. NEW NIGERIAN AUGUST 30 REPORTED A STATEMENT ISSUED
BY MORE THAN 40 AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY (ABU)
FACULTY MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE VICE CHANCELLOR,
PROFESSOR ABUBAKAR, WHO WAS DISMISSED AS VICE
CHANCELLOR AS A RESULT OF THE REPORT OF THE MOHAMMED
COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO THE STUDENT DISORDERS EARLIER
THIS YEAR. HIGHLIGHTS OF STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

A. "IT IS WITH GREAT SHOCK, DISAPPOINTMENT AND
ANGUISH THAT WE . . . HAVE HEARD OF THE DECISION
. . . TO REMOVE OUT MOST BELOVED RESPECTED AND
HONORABLE VICE CHANCELLOR . . . WE HAVE NO HESITATION
IN EXPRESSING OUR SOLIDARITY WITH HIM, OUR
SINCERE AND UNRESERVED SUPPORT OF ALL HIS ACTIONS
DURING THE PERIOD OF THE STUDENTS CRISIS AND INDEED
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PAGE 02 KADUNA 01164 301253Z

DURING HIS ENTIRE TENURE OF OFFICE AS VICE CHANCELLOR,
AND OUR PROFOUND APPRECIATION FOR THE GREAT SERVICES
HE RENDERED TO THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY IN PARTICULAR
AND TO THE NATION AS A WHOLE.

B. ". . . WE FIRMLY, FULLY AND SINCERELY ENDORSE
ALL THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY OUR VICE CHANCELLOR AND

BELIEVE THAT IT WAS THROUGH HIS INITIATIVE AND ABLE LEADERSHIP THAT PEACE WAS RESTORED AT OUR UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AND ULTIMATELY AT ALL THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES IN THE COUNTRY"

2. ABU STUDENT UNION ALSO REPLIED TO COMMISSION WITH A STATEMENT SIGNED BY ITS SECRETARY GENERAL AND ITS PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER AND PUBLISHED IN PUNCH AUGUST 29. THE STATEMENT SAID IT REGARDED THE COMMISSION AS "A WITCHHUNTING BODY SINCE ITS INCEPTION." THE STATEMENT ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF BEING MORE CONCERNED ABOUT DAMAGED PROPERTY THAN THE LIVES OF "OUR MURDERED COLLEAGUES" AND DESCRIBED THE DISMISSAL OF STUDENT LEADERS AND LECTURERS AS "OVERREACTION". IT ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO REINSTATE THE AFFECTED STUDENTS AND LECTURERS UNCONDITIONALLY.

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3. COMMENT: IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE STUDENT STATEMENT WAS MEANT TO SUPPORT ABUBAKAR; HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE FACULTY STATEMENT WAS BASICALLY IN SUPPORT OF ABUBAKAR'S FUTURE POLITICAL AMBITIONS. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL ABUBAKAR HAD ALREADY SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION AS VICE CHANCELLOR. IN A LATE JULY CONVERSATION WITH PRINCIPAL OFFICER, LONG BEFORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KADUNA 01164 301253Z

MOHAMMED COMMISSION RESULTS WERE OUT, ABUBAKAR HAD HINTED AT HIS INTENTION TO LEAVE ABU IN SEPTEMBER. WE SUSPECT THAT HE HAD MADE HIS PLANS FOR A POLITICAL CAREER AND COMMISSION REPORT MAY BE VIEWED AS A SETBACK FOR HIM. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW HE CAN RECOUP HIS LOSSES IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
LAKE

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